

Comment

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IN OUR OPINION . . .

Keep Provo Canyon a place of beauty

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"The wild things of the earth are not ours to do with as we please," reads a plaque at Cascade Falls State Park, in the mountains west of Heber Valley. "They have been given to us in trust and we must account for them to the generations which will come after us and audit our accounts."

Not far away, down the Mount Timpanogos road to Highway 189 in Provo Canyon, the Provo River flows through one of Utah's most spectacular canyons. Sheer granite cliffs, towering waterfalls, and lush greenery line its course. Few Utahns, it's safe to say, want to disrupt the canyon with over-development.

That's why future projects must be carefully co-ordinated to minimize environmental damage to the canyon. Last week, Mayor Jim Ferguson of Provo called the canyon "one of our best assets." He says a combination of public and private interests must band together to develop the canyon "in a very positive way."

If that development is to be positive, however, some definite precautions must be taken now. For example, Sundance owner Robert Redford is planning a development including 28 condominium units and two private home areas, one with 24 lots and the other with 26. Altogether, some 78 units would be included on Sundance property, says the Utah County planner's office. That project, however, hasn't yet been approved.

Such a development almost certainly would require a sewer line down the canyon. From an economic standpoint, those costs may be prohibitive. Even if it's economically feasible, however, there's the problem of scarring the canyon. Redford must wrestle with that image problem, but Utah County would have to wrestle with

minimizing the environmental damage.

Other canyon homes are on septic tanks, and presumably owners may wish to hook into the sewer if it materializes. But there are no assurances, especially if costs are high. If septic tanks are found leaking into and polluting the Provo River, however, owners might be forced to either build their own sewer or join a sewer district. So far, there's been little or no evidence of such pollution but it is inevitable as development continues.

Then there's the problem of Highway 189, currently a two-lane highway. The Utah Transportation Department is planning to let bids in late 1984 for construction of a two-lane highway through the canyon, with another passing lane added at strategic places. Most of the highway is expected to be built on present right-of-way property. Careful planning is essential to minimize scarring.

Certainly the present road plans are much preferred over the previous idea of constructing a four-lane highway through the canyon.

Other projects now planned in the canyon should delight Mayor Ferguson and Utah Valley residents. The Provo River is part of the Provo-Jordan River Parkway, with the state already owning much of the land it needs in the canyon by virtue of its title to the old railroad right-of-way. Restoration of Nunn's Power Plant in the lower part of the canyon and other improvements will add to the canyon's value as a recreation area and tourist attractions.

With taste and careful thought, Provo Canyon can be not only an attraction for those who live nearby, but for others from throughout the state.

Hong Kong leaves Amerasians wide-eyed

HONG KONG (UPI) — Fifteen wide-eyed Vietnamese-American children, shunned as outcasts in their homeland, flew Monday to the United States to begin new lives, tired but excited by their first glimpse of a modern metropolis.

"They were all a bit tired but happy," said refugee official Hans-Petter Boe, who met the children, ages 12 to 16, and 33 accompanying relatives when they arrived in Hong Kong Sunday for an overnight stay.

The group began the trip across the Pacific Oct. 7 from Ho Chi Minh

City, formerly Saigon, a sprawling village where the main form of transportation is the bicycle.

They stopped in Bangkok, Thailand, but were housed in a barbed-wire-ringed refugee camp outside the city. So the stopover in Hong Kong was the first chance to see the high rises and traffic of big city life.

"The kids were rather wide-eyed when they saw bright lights and cars in Hong Kong," said Boe, who supervised travel arrangements for the children fathered by Americans during the Vietnam war.

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